

KATHY HAIGH

Reports to the 35th District

Winter 2000



Dear Friend:

The Legislature has convened the 2000 session in Olympia and it is a privilege to serve the people of our 35th Legislative District.

I'm grateful for the effort so many people have made to contact me about issues. I have endeavored to respond to those concerns and deliver the representation you deserve and expect. Leadership that listens is the first important step to better government.

This report reviews some key issues for the coming year. In one way or another, they involve all of us:

- **Strong schools.** Safer, smaller schools and classes with high-quality teachers, parent involvement, and community-centered activities are the goal I continue to pursue. Our state constitution says that education of all our children is the paramount duty of state government. I certainly agree with that position.
- **Good jobs.** This is critical in our small towns and rural communities where we've been on the short end of the economic-development stick for too long. High-speed cable communications and economic opportunities for small business are the leg up our communities need.
- **Healthy environment.** We need a safe, healthy environment for ourselves and future generations. We have a responsibility to keep our natural resources safe — and to do it in a way that does not unfairly harm any one group of citizens or industry. This may be our greatest challenge, but it will also bring us our most valuable rewards.
- **Secure families.** Washington citizens have a right to good-paying jobs, and a right to fair and accessible health care, safe and affordable housing, access to transportation, security in their future, and affordable educational opportunities. Our veterans are perhaps the most-overlooked segment of our society and they have these same needs. We can do a great deal more to serve them.
- **Responsive government.** We need to be more efficient with tax dollars — that's for sure! But that's not all. We are really going to have to roll up our sleeves and look for ways to maintain critical services in local health care, transit systems, ferry service, and highway maintenance.

Serving as your state representative is as challenging as it is rewarding. Thank you again for your time and interest in the business of government. I always look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "Kathy M. Haigh". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Kathy Haigh
State Representative
35th Legislative District

Education:

What does the phrase 'strong schools' really mean?

When the House
Education
Committee
— of which



I'm co-vice chair
— visited schools throughout the
summer and fall, I asked myself
that very question time and again.
What is it that makes a school
world-class, effective, safe, and
parent-friendly? In all cases, I
have come to the conclusion that
the quality of our teachers makes
all the difference.

You will find a winning combination for successful students, motivated and hard-working staff, and positive attitudes when teachers are given:

1. Support of parents and communities.
2. Flexibility coupled with clear expectations from school boards and administrations.
3. Time to plan and interact with other teachers as a team as well as to continue in their own education.
4. Smaller class sizes and often smaller schools.
5. Fair wages for the hard work teachers do.

Money is a big part of the picture and I will continue to press the Legislature to find fair and adequate funding for our public schools. The more the state supports our schools, the less we need to draw on local property taxes to make up the billion-dollar difference.

According to a report by the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee last September, the amount of dollars we allocate per student ranks us 32nd in the nation. How

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Transportation
State Government

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can we ask for first-class schools when we have second-rate funding! We can and we must do better.

I will continue to work on the issue of putting all the money raised in the state lottery directly into our public schools. The total earnings of the lottery are in the \$100 million range — a drop in the bucket when you consider schools cost more than \$9 billion a year. But the principle of the issue is that people were told that was where the lottery money would go.

Transportation: Initiative 695 slices funds, sends us right back to drawing board



The \$4 billion transportation budget we wrote last year as a two-year budget

has been dealt a 30-percent cut by the mandates of Initiative 695 — before the full transportation plan could even be implemented. So, it's back to the drawing board for transportation.

As a member of the House Transportation Committee, I'll be one of the legislators "burning the midnight oil" to bring a level of security to the public health-care systems, and fire and safety services provided by local governments.

Next on my priority list will be transit and ferry systems vital to the security and lifestyle of our 35th District. No matter how you feel

about the initiative, it has created an atmosphere of creativity — and possibly a bit of optimism for some real change in the overall business of government. I will support any and all efforts to keep public transportation available for citizens.

Tourist train: Progress is being made in making plans a reality

Bringing a tourist train to run through the heart of our legislative district is a goal I have pursued all year. I'm very pleased to say that we are now working on having a tourist train on the Puget Sound and Pacific Railroad tracks on weekends in April and May.



We've started to build community support and coordination in this effort. Watch for advertisements — and please contact my office if you haven't already done so to get more information. It is going to take a great deal more work, but it's going to happen!

State government: Efficiency must be stressed in the use of citizens' tax dollars

I also sit on the House State Government Committee — a panel that has worked very hard on efficiency in government, as well as privacy issues, and matters involving our

election laws. I believe the most challenging issue involves the contracting out of some state services to private businesses.

We need to create flexibility for state employees to be more involved in the decision-making process. I support a civil-service-reform bill — and I will vote for it if it makes it to the floor of the House.

Further notes: We should address issues involving our state's veterans

I was recently appointed to the Senate Select Committee for Veterans Affairs, and I have made visits to our two state veterans' homes.



I have also visited the Bangor submarine base and the Camp Murray emergency-management center. There are more than 17,000 veterans in our District, and that number is growing rapidly.

Health care, services for senior citizens, public transportation, educational opportunities, and basic housing — these are all issues that affect veterans. Many people do not realize the work that must be done at the state level to better serve veterans.

I plan to support our veterans in every way that I can with my work on the select committee.

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